# SEX CRIMINALS

MATT FRACTION
CHIP ZDARSKY

## THE END: PART FIVE

ISSUE 30



image

# SEX CRIMINALS
## CHAPTER 30

## MY BLACK HOLE


MATT FRACTION
CHIP ZDARSKY

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DEDICATED TO YOU, THE FAN. NOT THE OTHER FANS. THEY'RE THE WORST.

I'm not ready for this to end.

I thought I had more—

—time.

Whaaaat the...

And then...

Fuck.

I did.

In fact...

I had all the time anyone could have.

Beginning to end.

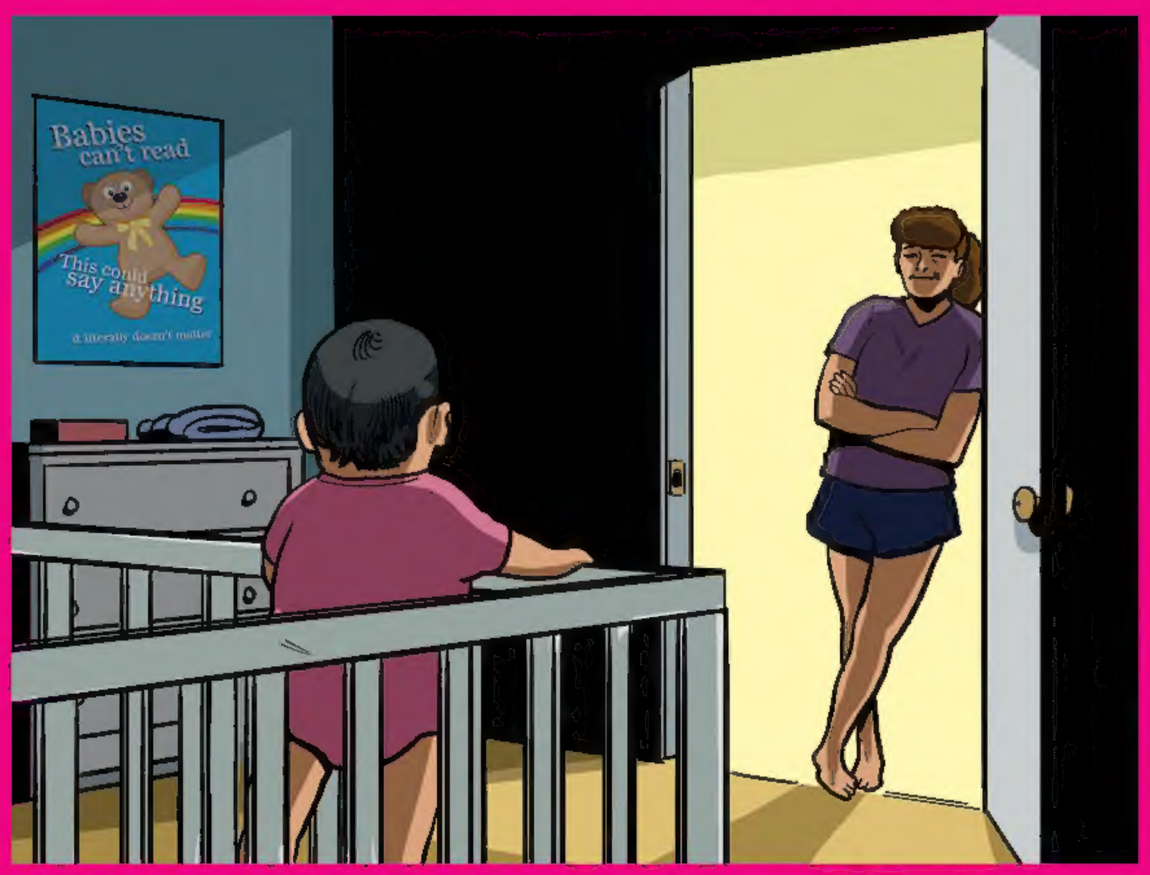
I knew I wasn't just *in* the Quiet anymore.

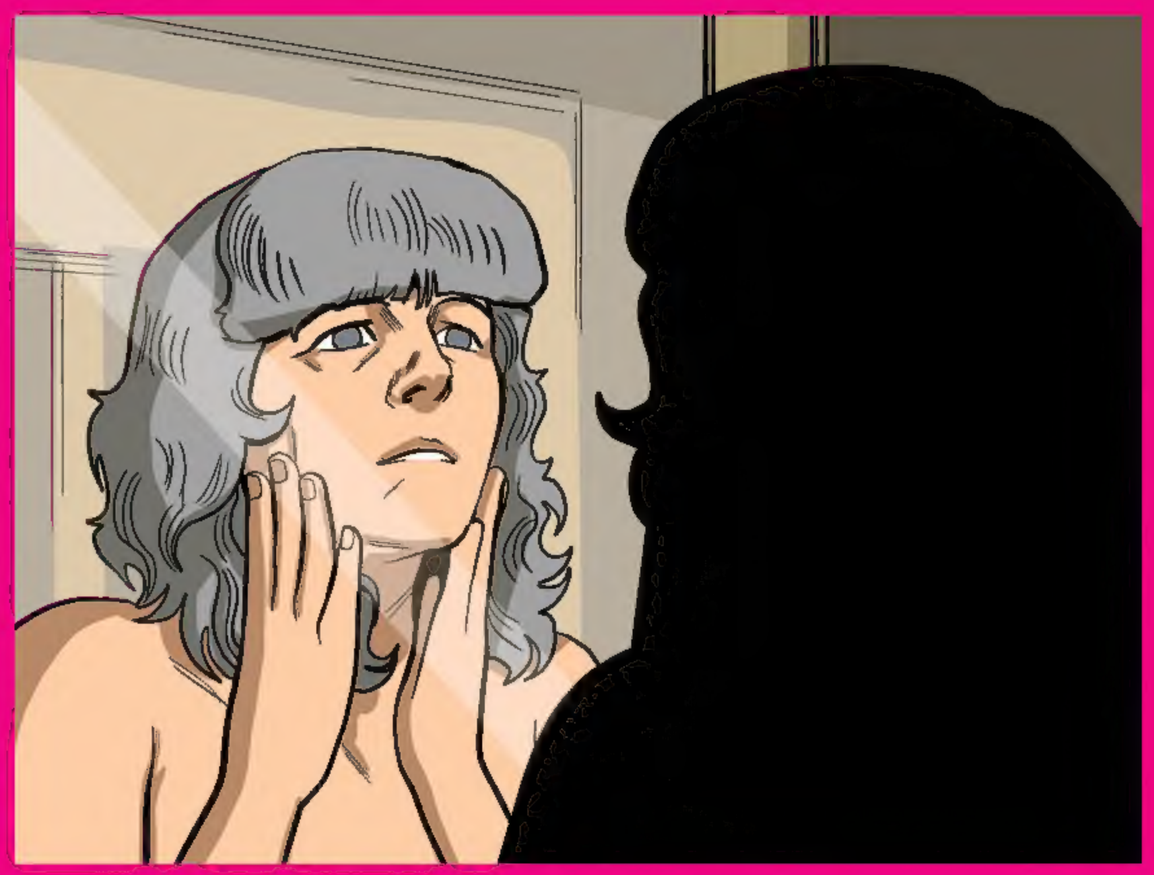
I was the Quiet.

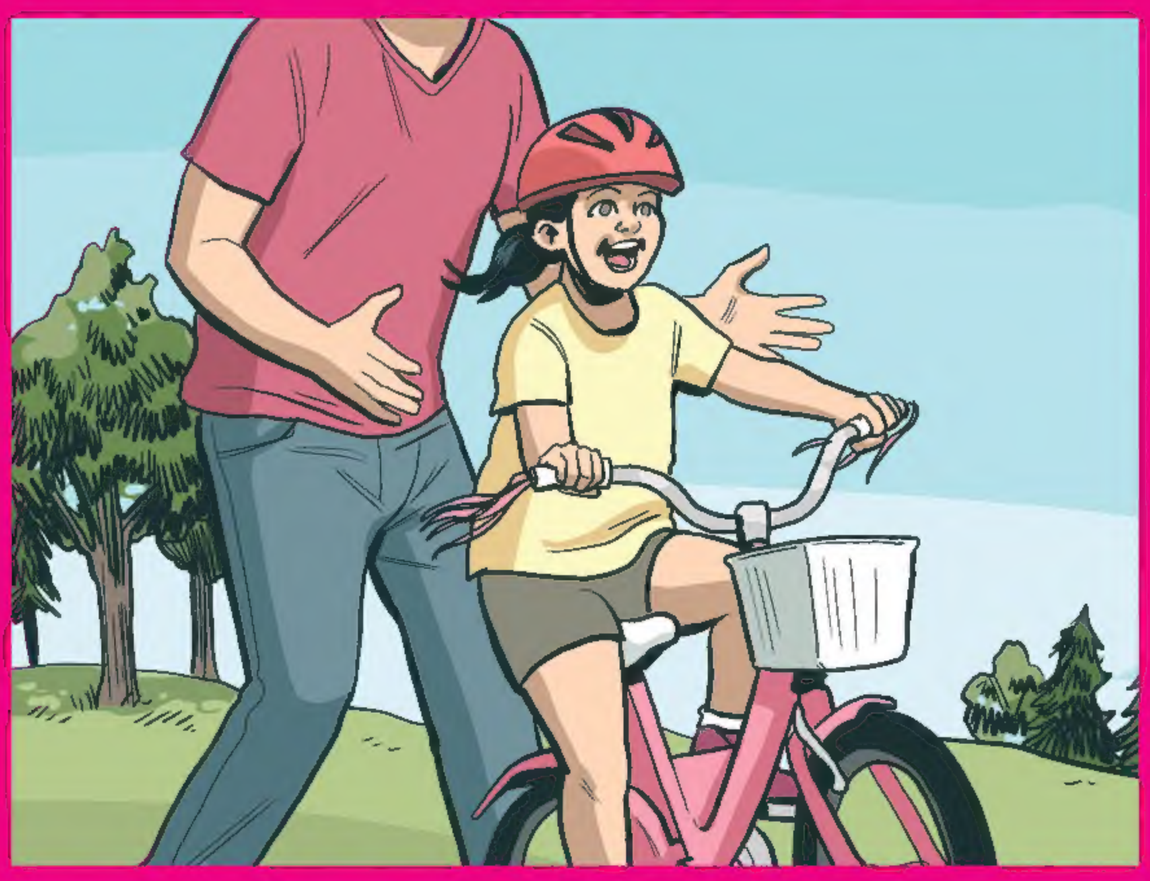
I was the invisible, turbulent, constantly flowing *thing* that conjoined every moment of my life, from one to the other, start to stop.

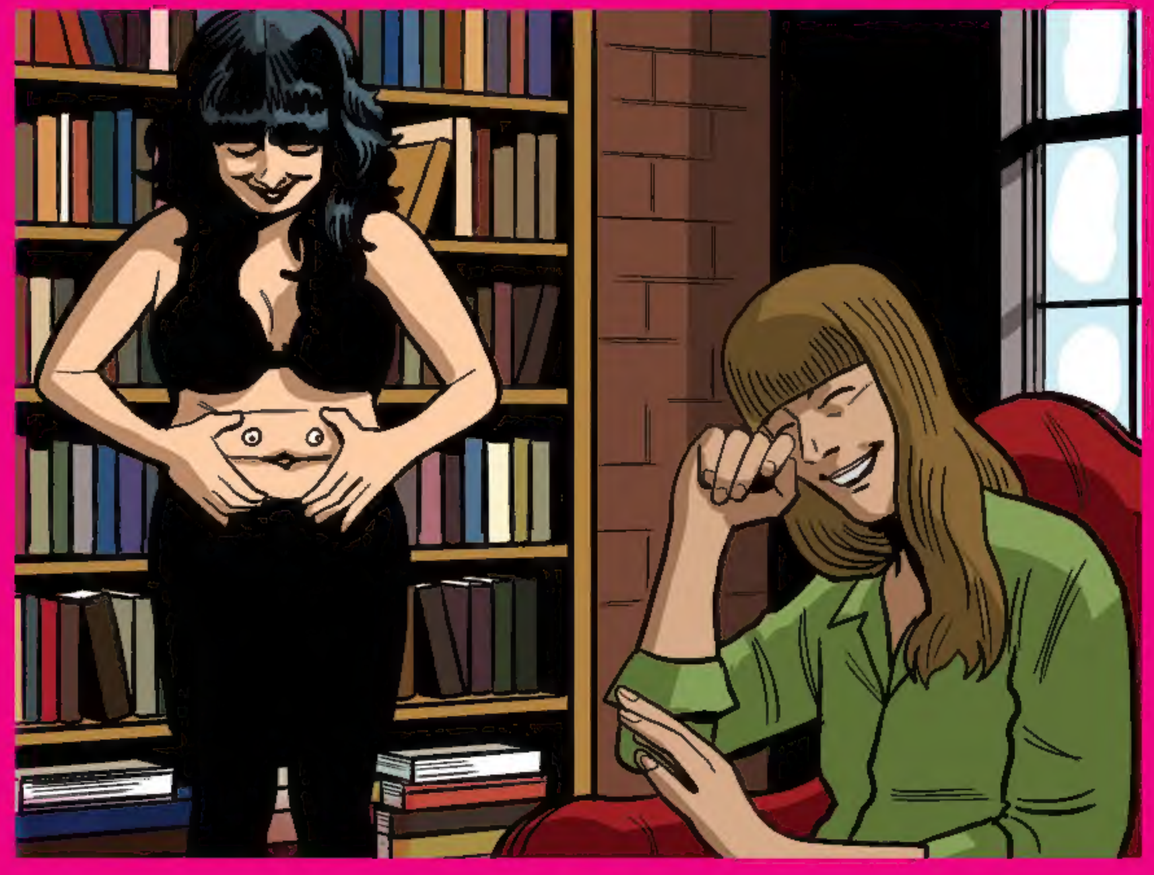
*Past* and *future* were only directions here—ways I could move.

So I moved.







It was like my life was recorded on a filmstrip, wadded up in a ball.

And I was falling through frames, glimpsing scene after scene.

Reliving random memories—

Or catching glimpses of things yet to happen.

I could feel the people in my life, the people that I love.

I could go *see* them again.

I could go back to the best times we shared.

Because they're all *here*.

Because "here" is all of me.

And all of her, too. My mom.

Everyone tangled up with everyone else, forever.

No no no don't do it don't you—

AAAAAAH!

No no no don't do it don't you—

AAAAAAH!

No no n on't do on't yo

But it isn't... happening.

It already happened. All the good...

And all of the bad.

It's real and alive as it ever was, even in its pastness.

Well, go ahead, kid.

Let her have it.

Small and heavy, like awful little magnets.

Playing out in inescapable, infinite loops.

These day-destroying, mood-killing, panic-inducing—

I don't know. Memories.

*Moments.*

A black hole that drags me out of whatever I'm doing...

Just to make me feel awful all over again.

The parts of the past that hold me hostage.

All the days that ruined my life.

That ruined me.

Good news, guys:

Here in Forever you can feel them all again and again.

Forever.

Like this one:

The last time I see my father alive.

I went upstairs to hug him goodnight.

"Hold on," he said, and went back to typing.

After a bit I felt ignored, so I left.

He'd be dead, twelve hours later.

Badal was wrong.

It's not people you can bring back here—

—it's those moments.

I can't rewrite or redo any of them.

I can only *revisit* them.

They stay frozen in place.

Fixed in time.

Quiet.

I feel like I'm a ghost.

And I'm haunting my own house.

Badal thought you could change those points in time...

And that would redraw the line connecting us to them.

But that line already changes.

Even if we don't feel it.

The point that starts the line stays fixed.

We are anything *but*

As long as we're alive, anyway.

Maybe my black hole is too big to control.

Or I'm too small to control it.

Some days it drags me back in.

And I'm twelve years old again.

Other days its pull on me is so faint..

..I can't even remember his face.

Why here? Why this, why now?

Of all the places. Of all the times.

Why did I choose to center myself in the worst of all days?

Like of all the days ever to relive, which one do you choose?

The shittiest one, obviously. Ugh.

It'd be the thing I'd change, I guess. If I could.

All these moments connect to *this* one moment.

If I changed *it*, what else would change?

Would I ever have even found the Quiet?

would I ever have found–

Even now, bathing in the good times, I realize—

—these aren't actually good feelings—

THE BOOBY HATCH

LET THE PROS PICK YOUR BRAIN

—these are the memories of good feelings.

Maybe every trip to the Quiet was a scramble to hold onto these little moments when I could.

Well, maybe not escape the black hole...

...but forget about it.

For a while.

SAVE OUR BOOKS

To hold still, just for a second.

And be outside of it.

Memories of good times are still memories, though.

And living life like that...

...isn't being alive at all.

I can see him

Shining in my future like a beacon.

The more he thinks about me, the brighter he gets.

I let him pull me in

Never feeling new joy is too high a price to pay for never feeling new pain.

So maybe this is gonna hurt

It's okay

I can take it.

Jon—

It's okay.

Don't freak out

Badal's machine knocked me out of...

I don't know.

*Time.* Like linear, y'know, one-Mississippi, two-Mississippi—

It was like falling out of a boat.

Then waking up underwater.

Nobody ever saw Badal again.

Maybe he got his wish.

But maybe—

—unlike me—

—he didn't have anyone out there missing him.

It took *Jon* for me to find my way back.

Err—

Back-*ish*.

I reappeared right where I left physically...

...three months and six days later.

Uh.

Surprise?

There was a lot of catching up to do.

Nobody could go to the Quiet anymore but me.

The outside world assumed Badal was dead.

Jon went nuts and went to jail.

Otherwise, though?

Samo-samo.

*Life came back.*

It was surprisingly easy.

I said my boyfriend and I hit a rough patch and I went out of town to visit old friends.

Since there was no proof of any crime—

—let alone accusations—

—the cops just shrugged and let me go.

Leaving Jon holding the bag for us all.

Hey, you.

Hey, you.

There was nothing that could be done but count down the days until he'd be eligible for release.

So in the meantime, I got to work.

I *knew* things about Badal now. About the way he worked and thought.

I don't know how. I just did.

Being properly paranoid, he only kept paper records about the people like us he'd found.

How he tracked them.

How he was capturing their Quiet energy or whatever.

And since I was apparently the only one that could still enter the Quiet...

...via my, uh, *usual* ways...

I felt like it was up to me to make sure the Quiet—

—and everyone like me that he found—

—stayed secret.

And safe.

I went to every BankCorp branch where he'd squirreled away his personal files.

Early on Sundays when everything was nice and quiet and there was no one around.

BANK

And one by one, I burned the motherfuckers down.

–shit–

AAAaaooww god DAMMIT–

Hey.

Ceremony's starting.

It's getting better, the further away I get from the moment when Badal blew us both up.

The fits or visions or whatever.

It's like the explosion was a boulder dropped into a lake...

And the waves ripple backwards and forwards across my life.

The more Badal and all of this madness recede into the past...

the phone.
ions will be punished
less that causes
more erections

The better off we'll all be.

No more going backwards.

Only forward.

After his 30 days, they commuted Jon's sentence to 11 months house arrest, as promised.

65

67

Pfft.

11 months?

It felt like we had all the time in the world.

Because life is long, if you're lucky.

And I am.

We are.

And we're all gonna end like we started—

—alone.

But I know I have myself.

I know I have this moment.

And I know that this moment is really all I ever have.

I know that *in* this moment, you are here with me.

And in this moment, we are alone.

Together.

And for that I am so so grateful.

Thank you.

And—

*Hold on.*

# LETTER DADDIES

SEND YOUR THOUGHTS, SEXUAL QUESTIONS, AND FINAL WISHES TO *EMAILTHESEXCRIMINALS@GMAIL.COM*.
YOUR TYPOS/SHAME ARE YOUR OWN AND WILL BE RUN AS RECEIVED.
ALL ASSUMED OK TO PRINT UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.

**WELL here we go, the last issue of SEX CRIMINALS.**

**I can't believe I wrote that.**

**Mostly because we still have one more issue to go, so really, calling this "the last issue" is a lie.**

**The next issue is a postscript kind of thing. Next "month," we leap ahead three years and three months in time, to check in on the cast as we say our once-and-for-all finally-ass-final goodbye and then get the hell off the stage. Really just so we can say our last issue is #69, but also -- well, you'll see. It's a book about time and we've spent a lot of time in the past. We wanted to end in the future, just a little bit. Mostly so Chip could draw a lot of Gundams and flying cars.**

**That's a lie too. I'm sorry. I'm off my game.**

**All of this is weird. All of this feels weird. It would feel weird even if we weren't in a pandemic, in a quarantine, in a societal battle over Black folks' rights to be alive, in a constant struggle against toxic and predatory men in our industry. Endings always feel weird. But in the middle of These Trying Times™, writing a letter column like ours feels extra-self-centered and egomaniacal; if we use this platform to talk about anything BUT these wars for what feels like our souls and our futures, is it as cold and tone-deaf and tasteless as it feels? I don't mean in the usual way we're tasteless -- if anything, Chip and I excel at that -- but tasteless like a Kendall Jenner Pepsi commercial. I don't know how to do this. I don't know how to do any of this. Not that I ever have, I guess, but... I don't know.**

**Any kind of writing I've done since the Quarantimes started has felt frivolous. Everything, though, about SEX CRIMINALS has felt frivolous.**

**And yet, so much about what SEX CRIMINALS became was because of you, the people reading the book and writing to us, opening yourselves up and sharing your stories and being honest and open and hilarious and filthy and vulnerable. These pages have become a smoke signal and a beacon and a venting ground and shared space for all of our awkwardness and vulnerability, and maybe that kind of experience, that kind of place, is anything but frivolous.**

**We only have two more chances to do this. The world is on fire. These pages have made me feel less alone in it all.**

**I hope it's done -- and does! -- the same for you while we have it.**

•

Hi.
Howdy...
Salutations?

I'm not sure how to start something as personally epochal as this e-mail. It's my first time writing in to a letter column, and it's my favorite letter column of all time, and it's attached to the comic that got me back into comix as an adult, and I've been wanting to write you a letter since I first picked up Sexy Crimz four years ago, and it all means so cumulative much to me that I've been frozen in place, not writing and not writing, and then the series was about to end, and I figured I'd missed my window, and then COVID hit, and now I'm like, "Who knows - maybe the last issue is already finished and ready to print, or maybe it won't be out for another year - I don't know how life works!"

So, "Hi." Thanks for making the world a better place, and for making me feel better about being in it.

Late last Autumn, I started coming out as gender-neutral/non-binary. I started wearing jewelry and code-swapped clothing and cutting my own hair, because none of the barbers I went to would cut my hair as goofily as I asked them to do. I also started using they/them pronouns, and made a zine about the whole experience (my first finished comic!).

I first came across the concept of non-binary genders in my senior year of college and identified immediately. I'd been raised as male, but never felt comfortable with it. Growing up, I often wondered if I was actually a girl trapped in a boy's body (problematic, but that's the language I had for it at the time), but that never felt right either. When I read about non-binary identities, it made immediate and perfect sense; but chronic self-doubter that I was, I kept it to myself. I didn't want to put all my friends and family through the "ordeal" of learning my new self (because I still saw myself as an ordeal to the people who loved me - go figure). What if it was just a phase? Then I'd have put them all through all of that, only to backtrack and be the Boy who cried Queer. All of which would be doubly embarrassing because it's such a college kid cliché. Plus, I was super-self-conscious about appropriating a whole community's identity politics just to make myself feel special (it's really amazing the lengths I've gone to deny my own truths). So, I decided to sit with it internally for a while and, you know, really make sure it was real, before sharing my newfound identity with the world.

Meanwhile, I started dating this really spectacular person (the only person I talked to about all of this at the time), and we've been together ever since. And, see, she's a woman, and I never stopped presenting like a (default) man. And even though we are both queer, and have explored all kinds of nuanced matters of gender and sexuality within our relationship, I never stopped seeing how others must see us: as a seemingly cis-

**SEX TIP** *What's good for the goose is great for the gander: so get out there and go down on some geese.*

---

gendered hetero-sexual couple. The longer this lasted, the more I felt like an impostor for identifying as a non-binary pan-sexual, even though it became more obviously true to me with each passing year.

And one of the hugely important things that I've learned and re-learned in your comic and your letter column over the years is that my sexuality and my identity are my own business, and there is no external measurement or burden of proof that will justify my truth.

Alright, I'm rambling, so I'll skip a few narrative details, but last Summer I realized that it had been 9 years, and I was still waiting to see if I "really" felt non-binary and I was like, "Shit, I've known this forever, and I just completely forgot to come out to everyone." So late last Autumn, I started coming out. But you see, I live in Minnesota, so coming out just before Winter hits, and everyone stays inside alone for 6 months, is a lot like not coming out at all. It was a slow process of coming out to friends and family and co-workers one at a time, and really getting comfortable with my new look and life. And all Winter, I was planning for Spring, when I would emerge from my cocoon as this super-hot gender-queer social butterfly, and finally go gaily gallivanting about town, and find my community, and really COME OUT in the biggest scariest most exhilarating ways, and then, just as Spring was upon us, fucking COVID hit, and I've been stuck inside alone all fucking Spring just like I was all fucking Winter!

So, hey, why not come out to my favorite Letter Daddies and the beautiful Brimper community that I already know and love and have? Anyway, thanks for your love, your support, your candor, your humor, and your art. Thanks for helping me be my weird sexy self, even if the world will have to wait another year to see it.

Weird love from Minneapolis!

-CC

**CC, I was going to save this and run it in the last issue, but the more I thought about it, the more screamingly unfair it felt for you to wait even a moment longer. So: welcome to Out, you weird sexy badass. Go forth and be awesome in the radiant light of your truth.**

***It's like I always say, CC: "The sooner you be who you are, the sooner you are who you ... be ... or ... oh fuck it you know what I mean. This is why I DRAW this fucking book."***

***Basically, congrats. Life's too short to not let your flag fly if you're able. -CZ***

•

First off, I searched my sent mail folder to make sure I didn't email you guys before and it didn't get published cause it wasn't funny. And Google tried to tell me, "email the sex Grindewald" was what I was meaning to search.

Secondly, as much as I enjoy the merch we have at hand, are there plans to bring back the Brimpers.com shirts from the volume 2 era? Or new merch coming later?

Third, the first time I had sex, I was 14 and all proud of myself because I thought I was actually super good at it, not cumming within like 30 seconds, and after 15 minutes of sex, my girlfriend's mom called her to say it was time to go. My girlfriend called me later that night to inform me that I just kept sliding my penis across the top of her vagina, in an unpleasant motion, but she was too embarrassed to tell me.

Also, I read SCs 1-25 at a dark point in my life and it was the one positive making me not wanna cry or drop out of my last semester of college. So thanks for that.

Anyway, I'm 25 and pretty good at sex now.

Zach B

**Zach, first off, on behalf of all of us here at Crimbo HQ, we want to congratulate you on being Pretty Good at Sex Now, which, really, we should put on a t-shirt.**

**Second, we sorta... weren't... equipped to do things like merch. I mean, I think we advertised it in the book once? Maybe? I was trying to get a SEX CRIMINALS watch made, but that sorta drifted away at some point. And then between trying to get the show going and keep the book moving, all of our energy went to that, and even that, as evidenced by our schedule and the lack of show on the air right now, was difficult.**

**Shit, one time, Eric, the publisher at Image, suggested we do a follow-up to JUST THE TIPS and it was like well, we can do JUST THE TIPS 2... or actual issues of the book. And he was like, yeah, no, no, keep doing the book. So, y'know.**

**Once the book is wrapped is clearly a great time to launch new merch so keep your eyes peeled! I promise we will advertise it even less.**

***The older I get, the stronger I feel about not putting more physical garbage out into the world, so if we're to do more merch, it's gotta be worth the landfill, frankly.***

***Some examples of things that would work:***

***-Kegelface Juicer***
***-Matt 'n' Chip Abstinence Body Pillows***
***-Fairy Cum Monster Nightlight***
***-I Don't Know Maybe Some Dildos Or Something***

***-CZ***

# SEX TIP *If you're both wearing masks it's a COVID-69*

•

Hey Matt and Chippy. I was reading the letter column and figure I'd throw a Hail Mary your way. And also just to unload a bunch of my stress on strangers because it looks so pleasant when other people do it.

I've been working on zine for bad ideas called These Are All Inadequate, a real DIY print and sell deal. The idea is to ask brilliant people for their worst ideas, the kind of thing you'd feel is too amateurish, out there, or just plain stupid to follow to fruition in a professional space, and make a place where they can exist and be celebrated for what they are with other pieces of the same ilk.

So here's the issue: I've asked about a half dozen great people who aren't SO successful that I'd insult them with the amount I can pay, and they've all been great. But my deadline is two days away and so far I've only had one submission (the wonderful Michael Kupperman, who I asked on a whim and came back with three terrible paragraphs about Diarrhea Kojak that I love with all my heart). Two guys have officially backed out, one is maybe a 50/50 shot, and the rest I haven't heard from in weeks.

I've made the commitment to table at a small press show at the end of March, so there's no stopping now. I was hoping for this to be a project where people could unwind and let the creativity flow with no stress and little effort, but it's become clear (and I should have known already) that that's not how creativity works.

Do either of you by any chance have any garbage ideas lying around, or something that you can flesh out without much work? Do you have any scraps that could find a home in my little zine? Or alternately, is there anyone you could turn onto this project that may be able to help? I can't offer much by way of payment, and I'm already poised to lose a comically large amount of money making this thing a reality, but I'd pay what I can and send some copies your way in a few weeks.

I know it's the longest of shots, but if absolutely nothing else thank you for listening. I'm sorry that I'm writing to Sex Criminals and have no sex problems to ask about.

-Jesse M

**Jesse wrote this on 2.27.20, when the world was a VERY DIFFERENT PLACE YOU GUYS so I am relieved at least that he probably was NOT at a small press show at the end of March, and hopefully, as the Covidpocalypse closed the world down it spared him losing a comically large amount of money.**

**I don't want to speak for Chip, but the one thing I kept trying to get to and never could in SEX CRIMINALS was this bit below.**

**If you can't read it, it's a little Post-It strip that says "A dog with human eyes."**

**I was certain it would be both hilarious and heartbreaking and, by god, surely there would be a place in these last six issues for it and yet (spoilers) there was not.**

**I give you, Jesse, this character destined for much hijinks and greatness in hopes you can give the idea the energy, time, space, and dedication it so clearly deserves.**

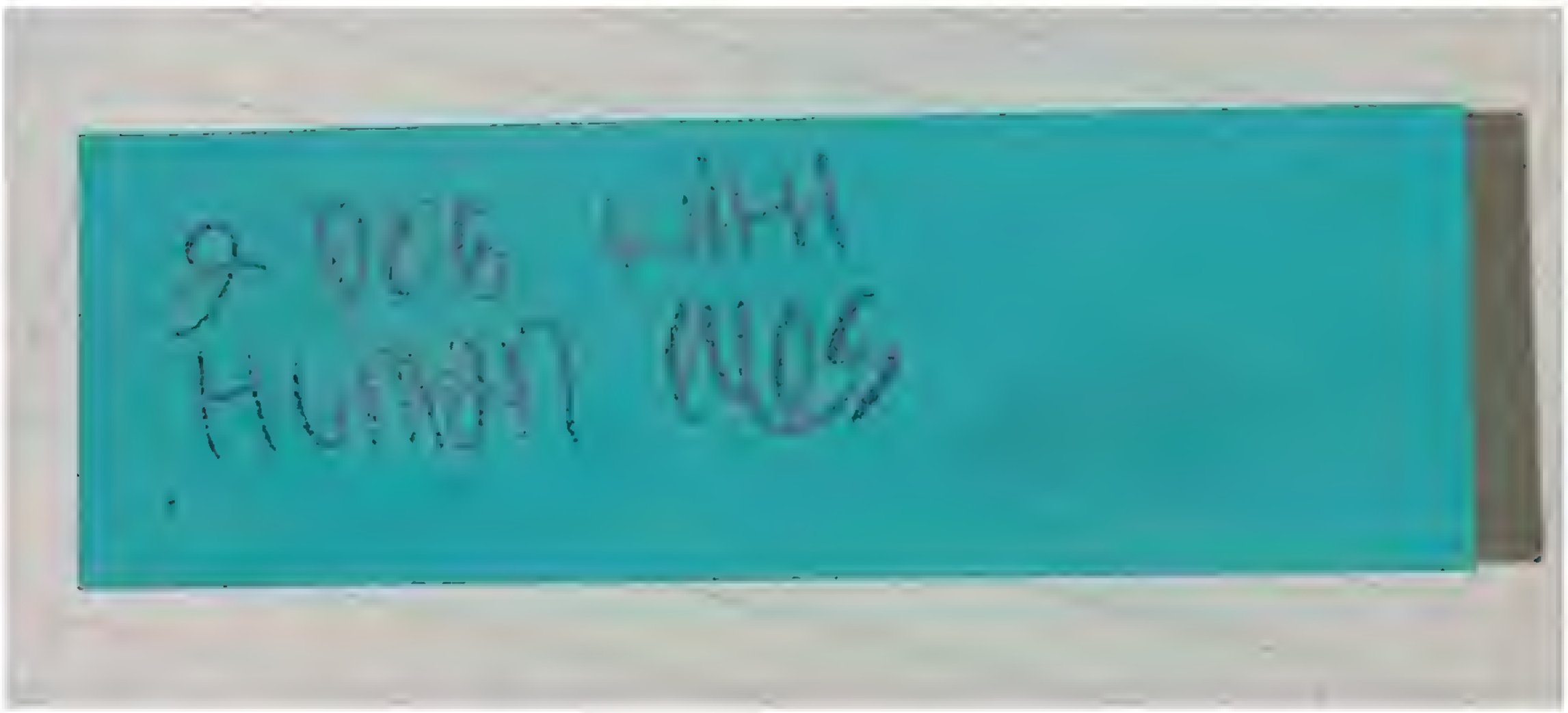
•

Hey

Me again

Sorry I emailed you last night and got the playlist as per Chip's tweet, today

https://bit.ly/ZackBsFTrax4U



***SEX TIP*** *Sex in the back seat of a car? A naughty retro throwback! Sex in the back of this Uber? A violation of our terms of service.*

---

12 tracks to fuck to

Zach B.

**I don't know what any of those words mean.**

•

Over the last year I've been lucky enough to have a platform where I could talk about the beautiful smut you've made. At Multiversity I got to write so many different things about how hard I get off to Chip Zdarsky and I even did a column on how Sex Criminals is the best romance comic on shelves at the moment (check out Pageturn on Multiversity). Anyway, it's great chances like that to talk about the things I love that have held me up over the last year and a half while everything slow but determinedly melted down like ice cream cake in a broken condom.

I think the thing that's beautiful about Whoopee Crooks is that it drags itself through all the same inspirations as cynical media (kinks and wealth and mental illness) and finds something funny and optimistic in it all. You show that there's a way out with everything. After a string of break-ups and general bad choices recently I fell on everyone's favourite crutch and ended up as a friend of Bill W. I think I'm still drinking a lot more than I want to be and a lot of the time it's just really fucking hard to think that there's an other end to all of it. But I guess it's nice just reading a really human story in a medium filled with the superhuman and seeing people getting over these same hurdles. You're giving me hope.

Is it weird that I'm writing a letter to the Sex Criminals column and I'm finding it hard to a) be funny b) ask sex questions or c) actually fucking talk about Sex Criminals.? I guess if anything I just want to know if I'm going in the right direction. I've been on antidepressants for a little while now and I've been struggling to take them for a little while longer than that. They double as sleeping pills and it feels like when I'm on them my life's just getting ripped away from me, I lose hours in my day, I feel flat, I'm always hungry and I'm just never horny. But the worst part is that they actually make me happier. So I don't know what I'm doing, I should just take meds probably. Anyway, everything with Jon reminded me of that and I think eyes and ears on a problem always helps.

Hope the book doesn't suck

James D

**Well this sure started off as one thing, then became another thing, then became another, didn't it? I guess we start at the start then stop and the end, huh? Okay.**

**Thanks, first of all, for the vocal support of the book. I too get off to Chip Zdarsky and am grateful you recognized us, and not FIRESTORM, as the Best Romance Comic On The Shelves At The Moment. Y'know, when I type it all out like that it sure sounds awful qualified but, fuck it, we'll accept the award. Are there two physical awards? Can you send one to each of us? Failing that send it to Chip, he always does the best stuff with awards (like lose them or send them to me so I can lose them).**

**Also "melted down like ice cream cake in a broken condom" is startlingly visceral and a not-too-shabby stab at encapsulating things, no doubt.**

**I want to be careful and clear with this next part: I've been sober for 13 years, and clean for 20. The clean part wasn't enough though, and I needed to "fall back on everyone's favorite crutch" and entered a 12-step program. It helped me start healing and it helped me get my life... I was going to say 'back,' but the life sobriety made possible for me was one I hadn't known before, and could barely conceive of – let alone conceive of for myself -- when I was at my lowest. I don't give a fuck if it's a crutch or not: it saved my life. There is another end to it. There is a way out. And I'm not just making it up for the comic. I lived it, and live it still.**

**And, look, AA isn't the ONLY answer, but, y'know, if you're still drinking a lot more than you want to be... you could maybe look into hanging out with Bill W. some more and see if it sticks any better. That was a right direction for me. And, there are a lot of meds out there. Talk to a doctor, a prescribing therapist, and work towards finding one that doesn't flatten you out. If they're making you happier, it would seem imperative to keep on 'em, at least a little while more, in congruity with therapy and treatment. It's a war on a lot of different fronts and it's exhausting sometimes. But it beats the alternative.**

**And don't worry. I too find myself time and time again writing the SEX CRIMINALS letter column without a) being funny or b) asking sex questions or c) actually fucking talking about SEX CRIMINALS, too. You're not alone.**

•

Hi guys! Sex Criminals is ending and it seems like the world is ending with it (or coming to an end with it, right?)

I have been postponing this letter and shit keeps happening.

I wanted to tell you that the world has such a shitty view on sexuality that it took me nearly 25 years to actually tell a partner about what I dug and what I didn't. I wanted to tell you that your comic started that, but I still punish my own desire. What? People actually come together? Can we try that?

***SEX TIP*** *It's okay not to, like, want to have sex or feel sexy or sexual or desirous of anything. Sometimes it's enough just to have someone beside you. Like Chip.*

---

I wanted to tell you that I had a long-distance relationship because I decided to go the hell away for half a year and between the decision and the plane flight stuff happened, nice stuff.

So the girl that never talked about kinks spent half her money with her partner to buy sex stuff and LDR toys and had lots of fun (I blame and praise Erika Moen).

And now I am home but I still can't see him since...end of the world? Are you all ok? Hope you are.

I also wanted to tell Matt that his response a few issues back regarding miscarriage helped me do the heavy lifting.

Ultimately, since I already had my moment of glory with my salad-story, I wanted to say thanks to both of you for this comic, if it is ever legal and non-risky again, I hope I can give you both a big teary hug someday.

PD: since I haven't cut my hair in almost a year, maybe I can propose brimping to my partner next time.

Ana C (the cucumber gal).

**Ana! Hey! We are probably as OK as can be. Y'know.**

**I wanted to run this letter because of one thing you said right up top -- "I still punish my own desire." Because it's so true and I think I maybe didn't realize it about... myself, about other people, until really getting into this book. I don't even complain at restaurants when I get the wrong meal -- I mean, think about that.**

**I wrestle with it, I talk about it in therapy, it's a real goddamn thing for SO many people.**

**Why is it so hard for people to reveal desire? It's a kind of vulnerability, ultimately. A kind of exposure, a revealing of a soft spot where some need exists, where some part of us needs someone or something else to help fill it -- my black hole, indeed. Even the simplest of acts, or gestures, of desires, can feel impossible to speak aloud, to articulate. It's showing someone a place we can be hurt, or embarrassed, or mocked, or shamed. It's to leave yourself vulnerable for rejection or judgment. IT'S THE WORST FUCKING THING.**

**And yet it's the best. Because when we find the strength and bravery allowing ourselves to be vulnerable requires, and it's met by someone who cares for us, who WANTS us to feel those desires fulfilled, the emotional rewards transcend just the thing you're into or the thing you want.**

**A few sessions back, I found myself remembering an ex. She would, when we were together, run her hand over my back to help me fall asleep (I am a terrible sleeper). In my memory, she did it every time we were in the same bed. And when our relationship ended -- on good terms, on healthy terms, no rancor or animosity or anything -- the last night we were together and she started doing it, I broke down. Not because the relationship was ending, although, yeah, okay; but because the magnitude of this gesture, of this little thing she did for me struck me as an act of kindness and mercy. The sum total of it overwhelmed me. It was something so beautiful that I didn't know... I didn't know anything. How to say thank you, I guess, in a way that felt appropriately and proportionately kind, merciful, and beautiful. I don't know how I ever let it be known that I needed to be soothed, but I did and she, bless her, had the... I don't know, room within her to take that on. It moved me then and, thinking of it out of the blue as I did, I found it moves me still.**

**I don't know what this is or why I'm writing it anymore. I'm just... thinking on paper, I guess. Feeling on paper, anyway. My therapist is on maternity leave for a few months so I gotta get it out where I can.**

**We'll take those hugs someday, Ana.**

***My strongest desire is to get my meal and then send it to Matt and watch him eat it sadly. Do I punish myself for having that desire? Damn right I do, because punishing myself for my desires is ALSO my kink. -CZ***

•

Dear Matt and Chip,

Let me begin by saying I am bona fide Rabbi.

At which point Fraction says "Bona fide? There's a penis joke stuck in that sentence!"

No, but seriously, I am a clergyman sending my first ever letter to "Sex Criminals".

To which Zdarsky says "A clergyman writing a fan letter to "Sex Criminals"? This gives new meaning to the phrase "lay person!"

In any case, I am a respected member of the Jewish community so you won't be getting a blow-by-blow description of my sex life.

Matt to Chip- "Blow by blow?" <chuckle>

Chip to Matt- "A member of his community? I wonder if he's a throbbing member of the Jewish community?" <snort>

Alright, so if you guys are done having a laugh at my expense, let me just conclude by saying "Reading Sex Criminals makes me

***SEX TIP*** *Any furniture can be sex furniture if you have sex on it. That chaise lounge? It's now a sex chaise lounge. And that's now a sex Danish teak waste-can planter. And that's now a sex McDonald's seating area.*

---

a better Jew and a better person."

I just don't know how or why...

Long may you run!
Rabbi Steve

**L'chaim!**

•

A few months ago I left a long term relationship with a guy who screams and throws things in anger. And then I found myself, riddled with anxiety on even a good day, hiding away and praying things would change. I begged him to seek therapy, he said he would, and then he never did. In the end, I broke it off, broken hearted, knowing I couldn't solve our issues alone. When I left, he said I made him out to sound like a monster. I always wondered if I was overreacting. Cut to this weekend where we were stuck together in a room for a mutual friend's wedding. Afterwards I found myself a hot mess, crying all over again over our lost connection. And then I finally opened issue 26 that had been on my counter for months. Suzy's questions about trauma hit home so hard for me. My ex never hit me, and his screaming was usually not directed at me per se, but when something's not right, it's not right... right? Our feelings are still valid and worth consideration, especially by those that really love us. And we can all have big feelings about small things because small things are big to some of us? I don't know if that makes sense, but your dick joke book is giving me feelings and I'm just writing them out loud, ok????

Love and afterglow to you both,

Ashley C

**Ashley, I think it's really difficult to feel loved without feeling safe, and it's really difficult feeling safe in an environment where someone has explosively violent outbursts, no matter to whom or what those outbursts are directed. And it's really difficult to deny the power of a lost connection. People are complicated and complex and contradictory, and all of that is, I hope, okay. Feelings might not be facts but that doesn't mean we don't have to feel 'em, y'know? Take care of yourself and listen to those feelings as best you can. Everyone deserves love without fear.**

**Like DAREDEVIL: THE LOVE-MAKER-TO-ER WITHOUT FEAR by Chip Zdarsky and Marco Checchetto, monthly from Marvel Comics!**

***Thanks, chum!!!! -CZ***

•

I need to know before it's all said and done. Is the lyric in Roger Miller's classic tune "King of the Road":

"3rd Boxcar, midnight train, destination: bang 'er mane..."

...*actually* the first ever cultural mention of brimping??

-Drew S.

PS-All the usual stuff about you guys changing lives and educating with the inclusiveness and honesty of this book. Seriously, you're extraordinary.

**I was going to reply "Not since Elvis Presley invoked furniture-fucking in 'Jailhouse Rock' ('If you can't find a partner/ grab a wooden chair')," then remembered it's a Mark Leyner line then I felt sad anyway we'll be suing Roger Miller now so thanks for the heads up oh shit and also the kind words shit sorry I hope the jokes are okay.**

***As everyone knows, Carl Perkins' "Lend Me Your Comb" was about cum-drenched hair, but it's unclear if it was from actual brimping, so you may be right, Drew. Cheers. -CZ***

•

"FUCK YES. SEX CRIMINALS IS BACK!" This is what I thought when I was notified that £2.49 had been charged to my PayPal account for the first time in a very long time and reminded me I still had one active comics subscription left. That was actually a pretty big deal to me because I can't remember the last time I was excited about anything in such a genuine and surprising way. I'm a bit of a pop media junkie. I go to the cinema weekly and otherwise fill my (somewhat limited) free time absorbing Netflix/ Prime series, video games and comics. Y'know, proper nerd shit. But honestly, I don't know the last time I was actually excited for any of those things before Sex Crims popped back up. So there I am, on my tablet, downloading the new issue when I realise that I actually hadn't read issue 25... In fact I had stopped reading half way through issue 24. Looking at where I had stopped in the issue I could see why. It was on the attached page.

***(To the right. Hi. -CZ)***

And it is a phenomenal example of just how good the craft of your storytelling is. This page makes visual reference to two moments in issue 2. That's a span of 22 issues and 4 and a half years. Yet the panels still have mnemonic connects to earlier parts of Jon's story which are immediately recognisable. And I wanted to point out just how cool that is. We talk a lot in these letters about how important and supportive this comic is in helping people deal with sexual concerns but I thought, for this email, I would point out just how well made these comics are as well. Anyway, the reason I stopped at that page in issue 24 is because I, for whatever foolhardy reason, am writing my doctoral thesis on how comics are read. And that page

***SEX TIP*** *Hey just want to take a moment to say that Chip and I have a "The Bat-Man" story in the upcoming DETECTIVE COMICS #1027 and Chip drew the hell out of it so maybe check it out if there is still a comics industry?*

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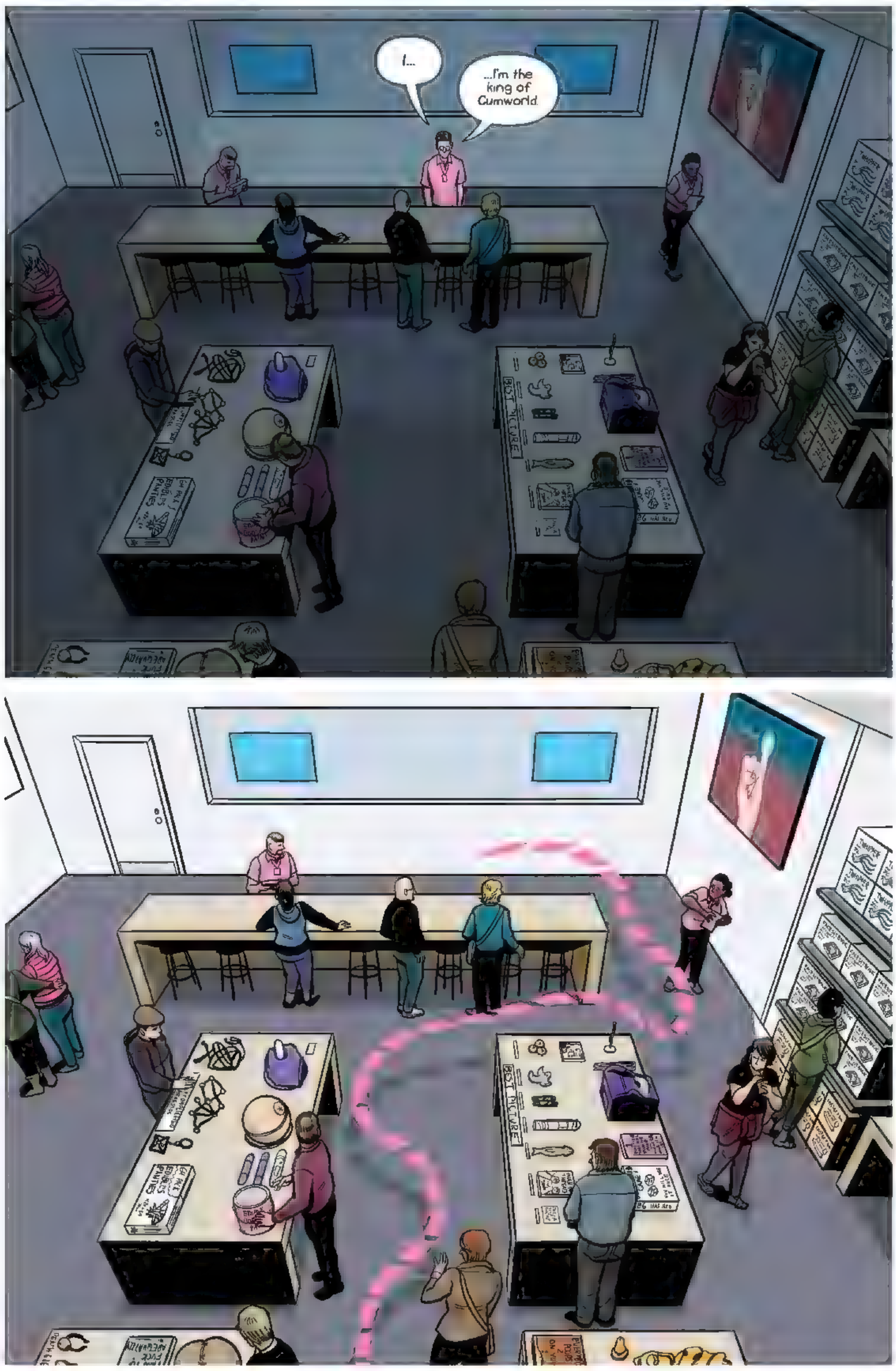



Jayms N.

**Jayms --**

**No.**

***Jayms —***

***Absolutely not.***
***-CZ***

•

Last time I wrote to you all, I'd just gone through my first big boy breakup, right around the time Jon and Suze were going through likewise. I've been reading Sex Crims as long as I've really had any adult sexual relationships, and now that you're wrapping it up I'm glad I can finally stop having sex and move on to working at the Daily Planet or whatever it is I'll have to do next to follow you guys.

I'm going to miss your book, and this column, so incredibly much for the things it's opened me up to - both about comic books and about myself. A lot of people have that movie in their life where they watch it and think: "holy shit, you can do that with a movie?" and that's basically what your comic was for me. Since getting into this book, I've found so much wonderful kinky weird stuff in local comic shops all over the world, and I've realized that people who care about Moon Knight as much as me can also care about butt plugs as much as I do. I'm always going to be thankful for that.

is the perfect example of braiding across multiple issues. So I wrote a couple of thousand words about it. Then forget to actually come back and finish reading the issue.

So now comes the second purpose of this email (beyond pointing out how bloody well made your comic is). I need permission to use some select panels if I publish the final thesis for public consumption. I've used a few panels from across the series beyond the ones mentioned here and I assume you will need to know exactly which ones and there will be some legal hoops to jump through. But if you are happy with the idea of parts of your comic being used in an academic publication I'd really appreciate it. If only so I can publish the words "I'm the king of Cumworld" in an academic context. You can reach me at this email to say yay or nay.

Thanks for making me excited about something and I promise my next email will be about sex (I have updates on the last email I sent).

All the best

As the spirit of Crims moves out of print and into our memories, I'm hoping you all would share some titles that you think are living in the tradition of cumworld proper, the books that put a smile on your face. I've finally gotten around to Kabi Nagata's My Lesbian Experience With Loneliness, which really hits the bittersweet/horny dialectic that I initially got hooked on with your book. I'm also digging SF/SX on your own esteemed publisher.

## ***SEX TIP*** *Any copy of DETECTIVE COMICS #1027 can be a sex DETECTIVE COMICS #1027 if you just have sex on it.*

---

Anyways, I've said hello and goodbye to a few lovers in between the start and end of this run and honestly, that was much easier than this. I'm always gonna be your letter baby.

Best,
Eli B.

**My erotic world begins and ends with DOONESBURY. Also again with "lover"! C'mon gang we got to get it together on this thing.**

***Every book I read is erotic because I'm reading it. -CZ***

•

No overarching theme of interest here, just a collection of thoughts clustered around the return of your magnificent comic.

(1) Hurrah for a Jen Bartel cover! Since these XXX variants started, I've been thinking "Y'know who would do a great cover? Jen Bartel! Oh man, I really hope Jen Bartel does a cover!" And now she is! This could be a great opportunity for a merch collaboration, too, as she designs happening sneakers.

(2) Suze is going in alone to figure out what Badal is up to, holy-moley! I hadn't thought about it before, but she's the only one out of the group with both the temperament and the skills to do this. Anyone else is going in angry, to fight; Suze is the only one who can approach this as an opportunity to learn. I'm intrigued by this as a character-study even more than as a plot twist.

(3) I've been working in a grocery store the last few months, including the beginnings of the pandemic panic buying. But the worst thing about working in a grocery store? The in-store audio. Even halfway decent songs go bad after hearing them every single day in that setting. The first one to spoil for me was Wham!'s "Wake Me Up Before You Go-Go." But, in the spirit of Sexy Crims parody songs, I've come up with this: "Wake me up/ So we can bone-bone/I wanna hang onto your hips and moan-moan." That's it. I'm not that invested in it; usually too busy swearing at the broccoli. But I'm starting a new job in another area of the retail world that somehow is not shutting down amidst the public health crisis, and I'm excited to keep serving my community there. Perhaps they'll have better in-store music.

Peace & Health to Y'all, to all the Milkfed crew, and all the Brimpers,
Craig B.

**Heavy same on the Jen Bartel tip here, and we were lucky to have her. I think SEX CRIMINALS Nikes would just have an explosion of little dildos sticking out of them everywhere, so it'd look like you were wearing a pair of Fry Guys basically.**

**Also my friend Craig -- a different Craig, not you Craig -- worked in a grocery store for a while, and to pass the time he'd ask customers, "Satan or plastic?" before bagging them up just to see what happened. I bet he wouldn't mind if you did that sometime, assuming there are ever things like stores and checkout lines again in a world where public health crises pass and make dumb jokes like that good again.**

***Gotta say, chum, not thrilled to find out you have other friends. Especially ones who enjoy making dumb jokes!!! -CZ***

•

So I was just hanging out in the shower this morning thinking about how the world is currently upside down and a very pressing thought rolled through my brain.

Do people still jerk off in the shower or is that over now because of PornHub and Chip's Instagram?

Then I jerked off and it seemed like it took too long and I had to roll through too many scenarios in my head.

Anyway, I figured I'd ask since the series is ending and this will probably be my last chance ever to get this question answered.

Thank you both for the years of sexy comedy and friendship!

Robert M.

**Speaking for all of us, yeah, no, we all still totally jerk off in your shower.**

***I've never jerked off in the shower because the shower is where I go to cleanse myself of my sins, not make new ones!***

***Yeah, jerking off is a sin. Is it too late in the series to reveal my puritanical ways?? -CZ***

•

Two weeks ago, some sex toys I'd ordered online arrived in the mail. My partner and I were excited; it was a Tuesday, and we were both busy at work, so we talked about breaking them in that weekend. You know, take an edible, get real weird, go crazy on each other's parts—in three or four days, it was gonna be on. Then the coronavirus came to town, and instead we spent the weekend gripped with panic at the state of the world and terror about our immunocompromised loved ones dying. I woke up in the mornings crying, awash in premonitory grief. My partner cleaned obsessively and didn't sleep more than a couple hours at a time. Sex was the furthest thing from our minds. How could we fuck at a time like this?

Fast-forward, and this is starting to feel like the new normal: coping as well as we can with the constant dread, fear, and anger; weathering

## SEX TIP *Hey, it's Chip. Just want to say that I ruined DETECTIVE COMICS #1027 but Matt wrote the hell out of it so check it out if there's still a comics industry?*

---

the layoffs; fighting as best we can against the hateful and cruel responses from our government and the worst members of our society. But there's also been light, and joy, and galvanization: hours-long video chats with friends and virtual hangouts; running errands for family and neighbors who can't go outside; new methods of radical political action; fundraisers and scientific/technological advances and art, so much art, that wouldn't be possible if it weren't for folks reaching out to each other, helping each other. Saying to each other, "Hey, I see you. I'm here with you. We're in this together."

Last week the founder of the company I bought the sex toys from sent out an email that said their products might be a good antidote to stress and the "stay at home" blues. But they also let their customers know that they're thinking of us and they hope that we and our loved ones are safe and well. They detailed how they're keeping their workers safe, and they asked that we practice patience and kindness, and look out for one another. And I mean, I'm fragile these days, but damn if it didn't bring a tear to my eye. Sex is important. Touch is important. Above all, connection is important—maybe the most important thing there is. It's easy to let it slip by or reschedule it; to think there will be time for it later; to harden in the face of the daily grind. But when it's taken away from us, when there's the threat of losing it altogether, it's suddenly crystal clear once more how vital it is to our very survival. Everyone interacts with sex and touch and physical intimacy differently, but at the end of the day, we just plain need each other. That connection, in whatever form it takes, is what gets us through the worst that life can throw at us.

Sex Criminals has shown us that all along. There's jokes and there's cumshots and there's wacky sci-fi hijinks, but underneath it all, there's heart. There's the recognition that none of us are in this alone; we just have to find the people we can build a community with, that we can love and support, and sure, that we can screw six ways to Sunday, if we want. I'm so grateful to you both for putting that out into the world. I just got the news that Diamond has stopped distributing; our comic shop is in rough shape. I know several others that have already shut down. I don't know what this will mean for you guys or the book or Image or the comics industry or all the amazing people who make the whole damn thing worth its existence. I don't know when we'll get to the end of this series, or the end of this pandemic, or the end of toxic capitalism, or the end of our lives. I'm scared, and I know everyone else is, too. But for now, I'm going to keep reading Sex Criminals and laughing and crying and loving along with Suzie and Jon and the whole cast of beautiful perverts. I'm going to keep reaching out and connecting to stories and the people who create them, to my friends and family, to my community. I'm going to keep doing what I can to help others and touch their lives and try to make things better, in my own small ways, as best I can, for as long as I can. And yeah, my partner and I going to work hard to keep making space for each other, taking care of each other...and yes, fucking each other. What else can we do at a time like this?

Sarah C.

**Sarah, I have long said our letter column is a place where men write in to try and be funnier or grosser than me and Chip (and fail), and that women write in to be more honest, open, forthcoming, revealing, emotional, or truthful than me and Chip, and succeed 100% of the fucking time, without fail.**

**I will say it was weird to start hearing a lot of "alone together" talk about These Trying Times™.**

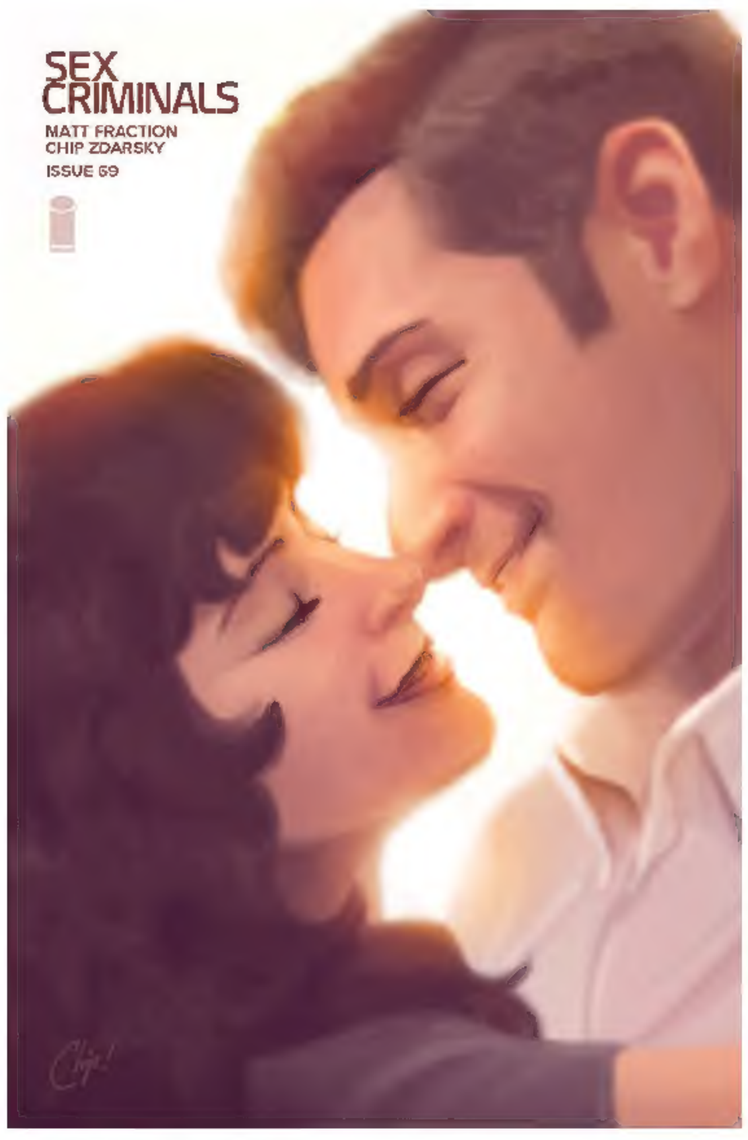
**Everything I've been writing since Q dropped has been endings. JIMMY OLSEN, NOVEMBER, SEX CRIMINALS. One thing after the next has resolved these books that have, regardless of their footprint on the stands, consumed the last eight years of my life if not more.**

**This issue, most especially, is as close to... well, it's not for me to say. But I knew I had a chance to say something to everyone that made this book and the journey it took me and Chip on possible, and I took it, and tried to say everything... I don't know. Everything I didn't know how to say.**

**It helps knowing Chip would draw it, in spite of it being, really, the MOST un-drawable issue of SEX CRIMINALS ever, and he'd nail it and carry my ass where I failed but...**

**Yeah.**

**Hold on.**




**NEXT ISSUE!**
**LETTING GO**

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I MEAN, IT IS TECHNICALLY ISSUE XXX

ZONE